WORLD CHRONICLE

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PROGRAMME: **"WORLD CHRONICLE"**

GUEST: Edward Luck
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JOURNALISTS: Leonard Doyle
The Independent

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Peter Spielmann
The Associated Press

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SYNOPSIS

UNA/USA

Edward Luck, President of the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), highlights the important role that the United Nations plays in the new era of global cooperation. He says the United Nations offers a wide agenda which involves other countries in world affairs. Mr. Luck thinks that the Security Council membership should be increased to include two additional permanent members, but without veto power.

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VOICE: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **WORLD CHRONICLE.**

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is **WORLD CHRONICLE.**

With the cold war behind us, the world has entered a new era of international relations. At the centre of this change is the United Nations. But does this mean that the world Organization has now become the effective instrument for global cooperation envisaged by its founders?

Our guest today, Edward Luck, is in a unique position to assess the new role of the United Nations. He is the President of the United Nations Association of the United States of America, known as the UNA-USA. It's a national organization dedicated to promoting the goals and ideals of the world body. Mr. Luck will be interviewed here at United Nations Headquarters in New York by Leonard Doyle of *The Independent*, Afsane Bassir Pour of *Le Monde*, and Peter Spielmann of The Associated Press. Mr. Luck, welcome to **WORLD CHRONICLE.**

LUCK: Thank you.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Luck, if I'm not mistaken, when you were on this programme last time, a year or more ago, the United Nations was beginning to regain the support from the American people that it used to enjoy in earlier times, having gone through a period when it was treated with some suspicion, partly because of a number of controversial resolutions and the perception in many quarters that there was a bit of an anti-American bias in the Organization. Has that support continued in the subsequent period?

LUCK: Well, actually, we're seeing support for the UN now at an all-time high in this country. We are seeing people now recognizing that the UN has a major role in peace and security, and that is the subject that has always mattered the most to Americans about the UN. As they see the UN in the headlines, they are more supportive. At the same time, some Americans who were traditional supporters are beginning to question the involvement of the UN in crises around the world, and particularly in the Persian Gulf. So some more liberal supporters of the UN perhaps are a little more sceptical today, while more conservatives are coming around to support the Organization as never before. But overall, it's a very positive trend, and we're seeing Americans more supportive, for example, of decisions by the World Court, such as the three-to-one majority supporting the idea of the sending the blue helmets rather than American marines to various conflicts around the world, and generally accepting a more multilateral character of the international policy in the post-cold-war world.

LITTLEJOHNS: How do you account for the shift that, apart from what you just mentioned about the Gulf episode, more conservatives and fewer liberals are now favouring the Organization than used to be the case in the old days?

LUCK: Well, I think it's two factors: one is the Gulf war itself, which was somewhat controversial. There are those who had grown up believing that the UN would never use force or never authorize the use of force. They forgot about Chapter 7 of the Charter. So for them, that kind of operation came as something of a shock. Second of all, I think some people in this country who traditionally have been critical of our own nation's foreign policies and critical of Washington thought somehow the UN would counterbalance American influence in the world; and when they see the US having a more prominent position in the UN, perhaps getting

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its way a little more, paradoxically, for some Americans, that is uncomfortable. So I think for the middle of the body politic, for more conservatives, for most people seeing a more active American foreign policy in the world, this is a very positive trend, and they're very supportive of the UN. But those who are more neo-isolationist, whether they're from the right or the left, are a little more sceptical now.

LITTLEJOHNS: Is membership of your association growing fairly rapidly as a result of the improved perceptions of the UN?

LUCK: I'm very pleased to say it is. In fact, we've increased our membership by about 50 per cent in the last two years. Now, that was after many years of either stagnating or decline. So we're beginning to feel it. The press is coming around more, the public's more aware of the Organization, policy makers in Washington are saying more positive things, and Congress, slowly but surely, is even beginning to pay our debts to the Organization.

DOYLE: Mr. Luck, the world map now has a lot of blue on it, reflecting the presence of UN troops, or UN administrators for that matter, as in Cambodia, just as maybe 50 or 100 years ago there was a lot of red on the map reflecting the British Empire. Some people have suggested that the UN is heading towards an imperial type role, a mandate type role. Is there a danger that the UN is doing this, and do you think the Organization is capable of sustaining such a role? I mean, of course, in the best sense of an empire, in the sense of helping people out, not exploiting them, as perhaps the British Empire has been accused of.

LUCK: Well, we've actually just come back from an around-the-world tour of UN peacekeeping operations, going to places like Cambodia or El Salvador, where people have suggested that the UN is

playing that kind of protectorate role. I think the difference between that and the more traditional imperialism, if you might put it that way, one, is that it's truly international; and when you see people from 40, 50, 60 countries cooperating together, you can't think that this is a product of any one nation's ambitions. Second of all, I think what is very different -- and this is hopefully a temporary phenomenon -- there are transitions in many of these countries -- they've lost their governments, or they've had rather nasty civil wars -- and the UN is coming in, hopefully in a temporary way, to bring some stability and to hand the government back to the people, sometimes for the first time, as in cases like Namibia, for example, where there was no independence, there was no democracy, there was no voice for the people. The UN, in fact, has been able to go in for a year or two years to some of these places and hand the countries back to the people. So I think it's very different.

There are some small countries, of course, which are concerned that their sovereignty might be brought into question, because the Charter gives very strong powers to the Security Council to go into various regions if they feel there is a threat to international peace and security. But I think you have checks and balances in the UN system. You have to get the support of both the major Powers and many countries of the third world, as well, in order to move in, in order to commit the UN.

POUR: Mr. Luck, now that the general debate is over, how much support would you say the Member States gave to the Secretary-General for his Agenda for Peace? And specifically, what, concretely, did President Bush offer?

LUCK: I think President Bush was perhaps a little short on specifics. But he did at least offer positive general response to

the Secretary-General's report. He urged another meeting of the Security Council at the summit level to discuss the proposals by the Secretary-General. I'm sure that the Secretary-General and we, in addition, would have liked to have seen the President make a real commitment to pay our debts quickly to the UN and to offer US forces to back up UN operations around the world. He came a little short of that; but he did suggest, for example, something that we've been urging for some time, that our own Defense Department put up some of the costs for UN peacekeeping operations, and that we provide a lot of logistical support. And I would like to see us go a little bit farther, in fact, to provide manpower as well.

But I think, in general, if the world community is inching towards the Secretary-General's vision, they haven't grasped it yet. In a sense, I think he was looking out two or three years in advance of where the Member States are today. But I think they're moving in that direction, and I think generally it's a positive outcome.

SPIELMANN: Mr. Luck, you mentioned the blue helmets, and, of course, peacekeeping is one of the most popular programmes that the UN runs, at least among Americans. But do you think the American public is ready to see American soldiers used as peacekeepers in dangerous situations like the Yugoslavian civil war? President Bush and General Colin Powell have been very hands-off about that sort of idea.

LUCK: Certainly in an election year American politicians are reluctant to talk about international intervention, about committing forces abroad; and I think we have to see next year, as we move into a new administration, what kinds of policies really are developed in Washington. But I do see a lot of movement in Congress, for example, where there are bills to talk about

Article 43 and the commitment of American forces to a UN standby force, or where they're urging the President to go farther. And I think this is a positive direction in this country. We did some public opinion polling earlier this year with the Roper Organization, and we were impressed by two things: one, by a three-to-one majority, people preferred to send the UN, send the blue helmets, than to simply do something unilaterally around the world; and second of all, they did support the idea of the US in fact providing forces to a UN command. And they're actually relatively positive, though by a smaller majority, to the idea of Americans serving under international officers, not just Americans. On this peacekeeping trip we just undertook around the world, we didn't see that many American peacekeepers. There are a few observers here and there, in areas like Cambodia, but we were struck both by their enthusiasm and by how well they worked with soldiers from other countries. For example, in Cambodia, we met an American colonel who reported to a Bangladesh officer who said that this is one of the most fulfilling roles he has had in his life, and that he did not resent at all, in fact, he very much liked the idea of being part of an international command. So I think it'll take time, but I think the American people are beginning to move in that direction.

LITTLEJOHNS: By Article 43, of course, you're referring to an article in the United Nations Charter.

DOYLE: I think many people were struck, of course, by the speed with which the Gulf force was assembled and that problem was sorted out with Iraq, but others have been equally struck by the slowness, the slow reaction to the crisis in Somalia, despite lots of warnings from aid agencies and others; equally so, the reaction to Yugoslavia. Is there something amiss in the UN or through the Security Council at the moment that some crises are given a higher priority than others? And if that is the case, are we looking at a

UN which is being driven by an western agenda in which we are not really interested in problems of far-flung African countries?

LUCK: I do think there is a problem. I don't think the problem is so much in the structure of the Organization as in the attitudes of Member States. I was struck that, five or six years ago, places like Somalia, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan were considered to be of vital American strategic interest because of the potential of a Soviet threat, or the spread of communism, or whatever we would imagine, but today they're dismissed as of no strategic importance -- humanitarian importance, yes, but somehow not in our national security interests. And I think that's a narrow vision, which I think people will gradually overcome.

There is, of course, the possibility on the Security Council for developing countries, in fact, to block decisions there, as well as those who have the veto. But, obviously, with the five major States, including the three western Powers on the Council, plus Russia, which is very cooperative, and China, which is relatively passive on the Council at this point in time, there is a fear by many developing countries of having a basically western agenda being driven in the Council. But I think people are coming to recognize that that is a problem, that they have to have a little more balance.

DOYLE: Would you agree that some of these developing countries attempt to block decisions at their financial peril, that decisions are made to withhold World Bank aid, for example, as we saw in the case of Yemen, or US Government aid? And that, yes, they have the option to block, or to attempt to block, but they do so at their financial peril?

LUCK: I think, unfortunately, that's one of the world realities: there is financial power as well as military power in the world, and it is concentrated in relatively few countries. I think what the UN does is it offers at least a wider agenda. It forces people, particularly in the developed countries, to think about other parts of the world. It allows the developing countries to raise their issues; the General Assembly provides them with the grand forum that they really don't have anywhere else. And I think the Secretary-General himself has, in rather sharp ways, this year reminded the Council that it has responsibilities in all parts of the world.

POUR: I'd like to speak about the restructuring of the UN, if I may. It would seem that the UN Secretariat sought your advice, your organization's advice, on their restructuring. Could you tell me what advice you gave them, and what you think remains to be done?

LUCK: We give advice from time to time at the UN: sometimes it's observed, more often it is not. But generally in restructuring we have sought a rather broad, deep restructuring of the Organization. There are problems with personnel and administration, and management, with a small "m", but we're primarily concerned about Management with a big "M", the sort of strategic purposes and direction of the Organization, and how the structure should reflect that. We feel, for example, that the priorities of the Organization should be clearly stated, and then the Organization should be restructured to respond to those. For example, the economic and social side of the Organization, ECOSOC, the relationship of specialized agencies to the centre, are things that we think need very thorough and very solid and very deep restructuring. It's not a question of just changing a few procedures here and there, but changing the basic way in which the UN goes about deciding what its priorities are in development and environment and social issues

around the world. Because what we're seeing, I'm afraid, is a re-emergence of the old security aspects of the UN, but we're not seeing a parallel renaissance of the economic, social and development side of the UN, which we think in fact needs to have a much stronger say in the way fundamental North-South economic decisions are made in the world. Because those, by and large, are not made in the UN, they're made elsewhere. And we really don't have any parallel now to the Security Council on the economic and social side.

LITTLEJOHNS: The programme is **WORLD CHRONICLE**, our guest is Edward Luck, President of the United Nations Association of the United States of America. Peter Spielmann.

SPIELMANN: Mr. Luck, you mentioned the American influence in the Security Council and China's curious passivity. We've also touched on the issue of power politics among UN members. Do you think that George Bush has been using China's "most favoured nation" trade status as a carrot-and-stick approach with China to get them to abstain on some issues that they have very deep opinions against, such as the use of force in the Gulf war and several Yugoslavian resolutions that have the potential for use of force by peacekeepers?

LUCK: I think the US and other major economic Powers do have various kinds of leverage over China, and I think the Chinese are very aware of that. On the other hand, I think a lot of this simply has to do with China not wanting to go it alone. If the other four permanent members are for a UN operation somewhere around the world that doesn't happen to be on the borders of China, it's very awkward for them to say no, to try to stop the world body, in essence. And there have now been more than two years without any veto cast in the Security Council, and that is unparalleled in the

history of the Organization. So there is becoming an assumption of action rather than an assumption of inaction in the Organization. And I don't think the Chinese want to be seen as the negative influence, I think they want to go along, in essence. We're seeing a lot of Chinese abstentions, but we're seeing very few Chinese negative votes.

LITTLEJOHNS: There was a time, of course, when the Chinese, instead of abstaining, used to declare non-participation. They're not even doing that any more.

LUCK: Right. And I think part of it is that the Chinese like to see themselves as a champion of the non-aligned, a champion of the developing world, as a voice for the poorer countries of the world, but in fact, because there is such a difference within the non-aligned among the developing countries about what their interests are in the Organization, especially in peace and security issues, there is no single position for the Chinese to represent, in essence. So I think they're caught sort of betwixt and between. There's no more cold war, and they don't really want to feed North-South divisions within the Organization.

DOYLE: During the general debate there was a lot of talk about preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment of peacekeepers, lots of prevention of conflicts, because I think people realize that putting out fires once they start is quite expensive and dangerous. Nonetheless, the very important people who are making these statements are the ones who appeared to be looking out the window when others were calling for intervention in Somalia, when the Austrians were calling for intervention in Bosnia last year. Is it actually possible for an organization like the UN, which is, after all, a committee of countries, to get its act together in advance of

a crisis and do something, or is this all just so much hot air and rhetoric by politicians?

LUCK: I think they recognize that preventive diplomacy is the answer. It's the old saying that a stitch in time saves nine. If you get in at the right point the resources are far less, the risks are far less. I think the problems are twofold. One is that any government tends to react slowly until there's a crisis. So, to say that there is an impending crisis in a particular region of the world is not going to move them to action, especially at a time when the Assembly's agenda and the Security Council's agenda are just overburdened with the number of crises coming to the UN at once. I mean, there are Security Council meetings now where they're trying to address six issues at once.

The second problem I think is one really of a transition in international politics. The UN is being asked to undertake, and in many cases is being expected to undertake, roles that are really unique in its history. And so for Member States, even for the body politic around the world, they have to become readjusted to this idea that you might have a preventive, very active, pro-active United Nations that would move in quickly. That raises questions of sovereignty, because in many cases these are civil wars, or the breakdown of civil society, so it's not a simple case of invasion of one country from another. So I think it requires a change in attitudes among the Member States, and I think it is coming. But I think it's a slow thing. Everyone knows where they ought to be, but it's more in theory that in reality at this point.

LITTLEJOHNS: Is the system capable of doing it?

LUCK: I think it is, but I think one has to begin to see a change in attitudes in national capitals. And that's going to take a change in attitudes by the public and by the media.

LITTLEJOHNS: What do you think of this Russian idea of a sort of hotline system between capitals and the UN and regular intelligence briefings for the Secretary-General? Do you think that would help in preventive diplomacy?

LUCK: Well, I don't think it would hurt, but I don't think it's the key. First of all, I don't think it's usually a lack of knowledge which is the problem. People see an impending crisis, but they don't want to react for political reasons. They don't want to commit themselves very often for domestic reasons at home. Don't send our forces abroad unless there's a terrible, terrible crisis, and everyone has seen nightly on the TV just how terrible it is. So yes, more information would be useful, yes, better communications would be useful, but I don't think that's the fundamental problem.

POUR: A number of foreign ministers, in particular Germany and Japan, broke a taboo this year and spoke about the Security Council and voiced their desires to become permanent members. Now, how do you view a restructuring of the Security Council, and is it feasible?

LUCK: I think it's highly desirable. Whether it's feasible in the short term I think remains to be seen. Obviously, the major Powers on the Security Council have the ability to veto any changes in the membership. So, particularly whether France, Britain, or China want to water down their own role on the Council remains to be seen. The formula that I would prefer and which I think sounds to me feasible, at least in the next three or four years, would be to add Japan and Germany to the Council as permanent but non-veto-

carrying members. And then add one extra seat for Asia, Latin America, and Africa, not just specify who should occupy that seat, but allow them in the normal rotating basis, geographically, to decide which extra State they would like to represent them at any point in time. That would raise the membership from 15 to 20, and I think that's still manageable. And we have to remember that the only times that the Charter has been revised, has been amended, has, in fact, been to expand bodies, both to expand the Security Council, which was done in the mid-60s, and twice to expand the Economic and Social Council. So I think it's a natural trend. The Organization now has 179 nations; it began with 51. I think it makes sense to have more members in the Security Council.

POUR: You mentioned that the five permanent members have a veto over any changes in the Security Council, but how does it work? Is it like a resolution that would go to the 15? And they would have to decide on it? Or does it have to go to the General Assembly first?

LUCK: It can start in any number of ways, but in the end what you have to have is the concurrence of all five permanent members plus -- I believe it's a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly of the Members of the UN. And it actually would probably have to go back to national parliaments for ratification. But you don't even start the process if people know that two or three countries with the veto are saying that they would never accept this. And I think one of the interesting things to watch is what happens with this idea of a unified European foreign policy. If there is to be a unified European foreign policy, why should there be three or four different European States speaking on behalf of that policy in the Security Council with two of them having a veto?

LITTLEJOHNS: Some people might not think there is a unified European policy.

LUCK: Well, that's why I think we ought to watch it. If you look at areas like Yugoslavia, one has to raise questions as to whether there indeed is a unified view in Europe about important foreign policy questions. I would not count on it myself.

SPIELMANN: One of the endemic problems that the United Nations has, both in its regular and peacekeeping budgets, is being on the brink of bankruptcy. As long as I can remember, they've been about to go broke a few weeks down the line, and they're always saved at the last minute by some generous Member State that generally makes an early payment of its dues. Now, President Bush, as a former UN Ambassador, has been calling for repayment of back dues, and the American public generally supports the UN. There seems to be a bottleneck in Congress. How can this be broken, and how can your organization be more effective in lobbying Congress?

LUCK: That has been our biggest issue probably for 10 years now, since the first major withholdings from the US Congress to the UN. And in fact it's helped us to rally members, rally interest in our positions. But it is a slow process. Partly it's inertia; partly I think in the last year or two it's a problem that in fact US payments to the UN have gone up quite considerably, while just this spring UN peacekeeping assessments quadrupled. And, just recently, we've had in Congress the decision in fact to meet in full these additional payments to the UN for peacekeeping, which I think is a positive trend. There also is a plan now under way for the US to pay off one-fifth of its arrearages each year for five years. The history of five-year plans is not terribly good, but this year at least we've had now two solid payments, so two-fifths of our arrearages have been paid to the UN. Some of that is for

peacekeeping; most of it is to the regular budget or to specialized agencies. So we're getting closer.

Personally, I think it's a national shame that we have not paid our dues in full. We can't very well set an example, declare a new world order, if we're not willing to pay our fair share for it. But I think things are moving in a positive direction. There seems to be bipartisan support for this, and we're doing much better in Congress than we have in the past, but it does take time. And it gets back to Leonard's question about what would it take for effective preventive diplomacy. You should have some money in the bank. You should not have to go around the international community with a tin cup in hand every time you want to launch a new operation. So the UN should have a peacekeeping reserve fund, and I think it should at least be on the scale of several hundred million dollars.

SPIELMANN: But the United States, notably, has not made any commitment to paying into such a reserve fund, has it?

LUCK: Well, it hasn't made a commitment, but it seems to me as the US pays of its arrearages, the question is how is that money going to be used. And many people in Congress are asking that, and it seems to me one good way would be to put that -- and if Russians and others who owe considerable amounts to the UN do the same -- put all those funds into a reserve fund for peacekeeping and give the UN at least a few months lease of life for a new peacekeeping operation.

LITTLEJOHNS: In fact, I think Russia owes the UN more for peacekeeping now than the United States.

LUCK: For peacekeeping alone, that's correct. And in fact, the Russians are falling farther behind. They simply don't have the hard currency to make the payments. And this is a most awkward thing, when the two largest debtors happen to be the two countries which are owed the most in terms of peacekeeping. They have the largest role, and yet they are having the hardest time making their payments.

DOYLE: Turning to the Yugoslav conflict for a moment, I think a lot of people have felt that the United Nations is playing a double standard role, if you like, especially in particular in relation to Bosnia, which is, after all, a Member State of the Organization, in that the United Nations forces are remaining as neutral as they possibly can in the conflict, and are effectively standing by as grave violations of human rights have taken place. They have not gone after or pursued the detention camp issue. They have stood by while the capital city Sarajevo has been bombed night after night. Is there something amiss here? What is wrong with this picture? Should the UN be playing a more interventionist role in the Yugoslav conflict?

LUCK: Well, it's too late to rewrite history, obviously, but I think the UN should have gone into Bosnia-Herzegovina at the time of their plebiscite for independence. There was a request for that, they had gone into Croatia. The great contrast, of course, is in Croatia things are moving in the right direction, the UN is there in force, and the incidents are relatively few. I think if they had moved into Bosnia it would have been the preventive diplomacy role that you suggested, getting in there early, preventing bad things from happening. They didn't do that. The US didn't want it, the Europeans didn't want it, I think the Russians didn't want it at that point in time, so it didn't happen.

But now it seems to me the problem really is the mandate. It's not the fault of the forces on the ground -- they're really put between the rock and the hard place. But the mandate simply has not been clarified. And as we went around the world looking at different UN peacekeeping operations, if the mandate is clear, the UN has the professionalism to carry it out. But if the Member States, and particularly those in the Security Council, don't know what they want or can't decide until it's too late, then it puts the poor UN forces really at risk in a very untenable situation. And I think that's what we're seeing now in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Someone has to decide, you either have to escalate or de-escalate. It seems to me the UN should become more actively involved and should at the very least provide very effective ways of protecting relief operations in the area, and I think eventually perhaps even taking a stronger role.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Luck, that's all the time we have. Thank you for joining us on this edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE**. Our guest has been Edward Luck, President of the United Nations Association of the United States of America. He was interviewed here at United Nations Headquarters in New York by Leonard Doyle of *The Independent*, Afsane Bassir Pour of *Le Monde*, and Peter Spielmann of The Associated Press.

I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

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